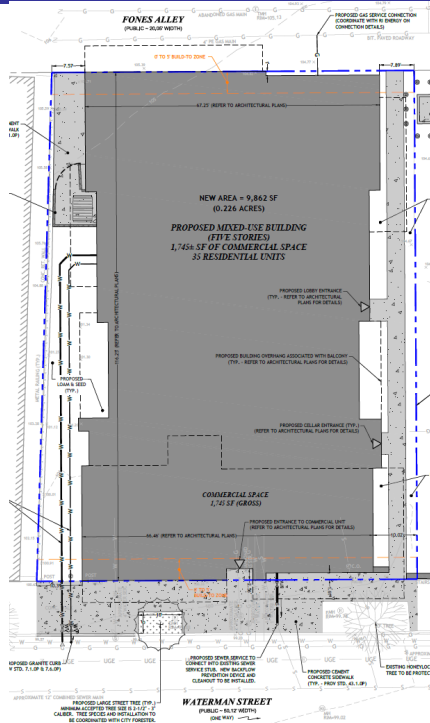


Providence City Plan Commission

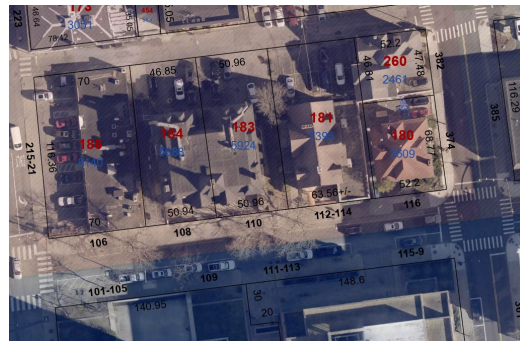
July 16, 2024



AGENDA ITEM ■ 108-110 WATERMAN STREET



View of building and rendering



Site plan and aerial view of the site

OVERVIEW

**OWNER/
APPLICANT:** Walter Bronhard

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The applicant is proposing to demolish the existing building to construct a new mixed-use five story building with commercial use on the ground floor and 35 dwelling units through the building. A waiver from submission of state approvals at the preliminary plan stage is being requested.

**CASE NO./
PROJECT TYPE:** 23-030 MA
Preliminary Plan

**PROJECT
LOCATION:** 108-110 Waterman Street
C-2 zoning district, I-3E
overlay
AP 12 Lot 183 and 184

RECOMMENDATION: Approval of preliminary plan

NEIGHBORHOOD: College Hill

PROJECT PLANNER: Choyon Manjrekar



Elevations and proposed floor plans

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The development is composed of two lots located between Waterman Street and Fones Alley. The site is zoned C-2 under the I-3E overlay. The lots are occupied by a building with a lot line passing through it. The applicant is proposing to demolish the building, adjust lot lines, and construct a new five story mixed use building fronting on Waterman Street. Commercial space will be provided on the ground floor with 35 two-bedroom units in the rest of the building, with the exception of two one-bedroom units in the cellar. The CPC granted a dimensional adjustment for height at the master plan stage, allowing for a height of 60’ and five stories, which is over the 50’ four story height limit of the zone.

ANALYSIS AND IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL ISSUES

Use

The property is zoned C-2 under the I-3E overlay. Mixed use consisting of residential and commercial development is permitted by right in the C-2 zone with no restriction on the number of dwelling units per lot. The I-3E overlay permits higher educational uses but is not relevant to this application.

Dimensions and site design

The building occupying the lots is proposed to be demolished, and the lot reconfigured through an administrative subdivision resulting in an area of 9,862 SF. The proposed building is set to the front lot line on Waterman Street providing direct street access to the commercial space. Entrance for residents will be provided on the eastern wall.

The CPC granted a dimensional adjustment for a

proposed height of approximately 60' and five stories—which is over the 50' four-story height limit of the zone. Five units, the lobby and elevator, will be located on the ground floor in addition to the commercial space. Two units, utilities, and bike parking will be located in the cellar. Seven units each will be located on each of the second through fifth stories.

Over 60% of the front façade will be located at the front lot line, meeting the build-to zone requirement. The building's exterior will employ stone veneer, wood siding and a composite panel system, which are materials permitted by right. The upper stories will be composed of a mix of glass and the masonry veneer with balconies. The transparency on the commercial area will exceed 50% and the upper stories will provide over 10% of required transparency.

A transformer serving the project will be located on lot 181 to the east of the development, which is also owned by the applicant, and accessible from Fones Alley.

Landscaping

Approximately 1,500 SF of canopy coverage is required to meet the landscaping requirement based on the proposed lot size. The applicant proposes to meet the canopy coverage requirement by preserving a honey locust tree in front of the building, which will account for 1,000 SF of canopy coverage, and by working with the City Forester to plant a medium tree, which will account for an additional 700 SF of canopy coverage.

Parking

No parking is required or provided as the lot will measure less than 10,000 SF upon subdivision. However, one parking space on the property currently is reserved for another development owned by the applicant at 134 Waterman St. This will be addressed by moving the space to 112 Waterman Street, documentation of which will be required with the final plan submission. Five bicycle spaces are required to meet the bicycle parking requirement of one space for every five units. The applicant will meet this requirement by providing ten spaces in the basement.

Lighting

No external lighting sources are proposed.

Environmental impact

The site is exempt from conforming to the stormwater ordinance and does not require any state approvals. The development will result in a slight decrease in impervious surface coverage from 95.5% impervious to 89.3%, which would allow for a slight improvement in drainage conditions. Silt sacks and straw wattle will be used for erosion control during construction. Trash will be collected from Fones Alley.

A roof deck that was proposed at the preliminary plan stage has been eliminated.

The current building on the property is a distinctive looking structure. It is not in a local historic district. But it is in the College Hill National Register Historic District. It is described as a Queen Anne/Late Victorian structure, constructed in 1877. A memo on the building's significance was prepared by Historic Preservation Planner Jason Martin and presented at the master plan stage. The memo provided a history of the building and found that although the form is handsome, the building is not singular in nature. The memo recommended that an archival package consisting of a history of the property, elevation drawings, floorplans, exterior and interior photos be assembled and submitted to the Rhode Island Historic Preservation and Heritage Commission (RIHPHC) as part of the Rhode Island Historical Resources Archive and also to the City of Providence's Archives. This would serve as a remediation to demolition. This package of information is what the Providence HDC typically requests when it approves demolition proposals. The memo recommended that the CPC require that this be submitted by the applicant with the final plan.

Waiver submission of state approvals

The applicant has requested a waiver from submission of state approvals at the preliminary plan stage, proposing that they be submitted with the final plan. The applicant requires an approval from the Narragansett Bay Commission (NBC). It is the DPD's opinion that granting the waiver would be in the interest of good planning practice as it would allow the applicant to proceed with the approval process.

FINDINGS

Section 1005 of the Commission's *Development Review Regulations* requires that the City Plan Commission make the following findings as part of their approval of all land development project applications. Based on the analysis contained herein and subject to the conditions contained in this report, staff has prepared the following findings regarding the request for approval of the master and preliminary plan stages:

1. *Consistency—The proposed development is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and/or has satisfactorily addressed the issues where there may be inconsistencies.*

The subject property is located in an area that the future land use map of Providence Tomorrow: The Comprehensive Plan intends for Neighborhood Commercial/Mixed Use development. The plan describes these areas as ones intended to foster pedestrian oriented needs like retail and housing in buildings oriented toward the street. The development conforms to this land use designation. As the building will be located on a main street in proximity to a commercial corridor, it conforms to objective BE-2 of the plan which encourages new development to complement traditional character. Creation of housing will conform to objective H-2 of the plan which encourages creation of new housing.

2. *Compliance with Zoning Ordinance—The proposed development is in compliance with the standards and provisions of the Zoning Ordinance.*

Use: Mixed use development consisting of retail and residential use is permitted by right in the C-2 zone.

Dimension: The development will conform to the dimensional and design requirements of the C-2 zone with the CPC having granted a dimensional adjustment for height at the master plan stage. No residential or parking use will be located within 20' of Waterman St., in compliance with Section 503.A.8 of the ordinance.

Parking: No parking is required as the lot will measure less than 10,000 SF upon subdivision, but the applicant will meet the bicycle parking requirement. As discussed, the space reserved for the development at 134 Waterman St. will be moved to 112 Waterman Street.

Landscaping: The applicant will meet the landscaping requirement under the supervision of the City Forester.

3. *Environmental Impact—There will be no significant environmental impacts from the proposed development as shown on the final plan, with all required conditions for approval.*

No significant negative environmental impacts are expected as the applicant is expected to come into compliance with all applicable environmental regulations.

4. *Buildable Lot—The subdivision or development project, as proposed, will not result in the creation of individual lots with such physical constraints to development that building on those lots according to pertinent regulations and building standards would be impracticable.*

The applicant is proposing an administrative subdivision to configure the lot as depicted on plans. The applicant is required to obtain and submit encroachment permits at the permitting stage. Subject to the subdivision being approved, there are no physical constraints that impact development of this property, as the lot as proposed will comply with the dimensional requirements of the C-2 zone with no impediments to development.

5. *Street Access—All proposed development projects and all subdivision lots shall have adequate and permanent physical access to a public street. Lot frontage on a public street without physical access shall not be considered compliance with this requirement.*

Adequate pedestrian access is provided from Waterman Street and Fones Alley.

RECOMMENDATION—Waiver from submission of state approvals

The CPC should grant a waiver from submission of state approvals finding that it would be in the interest of good planning practice, with the condition that any required approvals be submitted with the final plan.

RECOMMENDATION—Preliminary Plan

Based on the foregoing discussion, the CPC should vote to approve the master plan subject to the following conditions:

1. The applicant shall document the building's interior and exterior as described in the DPD's memo, and present an archival package to the RIHPHC and the DPD.
2. The applicant shall apply for an administrative subdivision to configure the lots as depicted on the plan.
3. The applicant shall work with the City Forester to determine appropriate planting locations.
4. The applicant shall file a lien for a parking space at 112 Waterman Street to be used by the property at 134 Waterman Street.
5. The applicant shall obtain any required encroachment permits at the permitting stage.
6. Final plan approval should be delegated to DPD staff.